

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01 H-03

INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01

SAM-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 IO-14 NEA-10

ACDA-19 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 /228 W

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R 051924Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8156

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 08515

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, FR, US

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF FRENCH OFFICIAL ON ENERGY COOPERATION

REF: PARIS 5644

1. FOLLOWING UP TELEPHONE CONVERSATION REPORTED REFTTEL,
ECON/COM MIN CALLED ON JEAN BLANCARD, DELEGATE GENERAL
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FOR ENERGY, TO LEARN HIS VIEWS ON INTERNATIONAL ENERGY

COOPERATION. BLANCARD REAFFIRMED HIS BELIEF THAT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WAS ESSENTIAL IF THE CHALLENGE OF THE ENERGY CRISIS WAS TO BE SURMOUNTED AND SAID THAT HE FAVORED FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THIS COOPERATION WITHIN POLITICAL LIMITS ESTABLISHED BY HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. BLANCARD THEN INDICATED THREE AREAS WHERE HE BELIEVED EITHER COOPERATION WITH U.S. OR AT LEAST CLEARER INDICATION OF U.S. INTENTIONS THAN WAS NOW AVAILABLE WOULD BE HELPFUL TO FRANCE'S OWN ENERGY PROGRAM.

3. THE FIRST AREA WAS PRESIDENT NIXON'S "PROJECT INDEPENDENCE." BLANCARD SAID U.S. CONSUMPTION OF IMPORTED OIL WAS ALREADY LARGE IN ABSOLUTE TERMS AND BEFORE OUTBREAK OF ENERGY CRISIS HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO INCREASE RAPIDLY. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHETHER THE U.S. REALLY MEANT IT WHEN IT SAID IT INTENDED TO BECOME COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF IMPORTED SOURCES OF ENERGY BY 1980. IF THE U.S. WERE TO STOP IMPORTING ARAB OIL, THIS SHARP DROP IN DEMAND WOULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT EFFECT ON PRICE, THUS GREATLY EASING THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF THOSE COUNTRIES LIKE FRANCE WHO WERE UNABLE TO CUT THEMSELVES OFF ENTIRELY FROM IMPORTED OIL.

4. THE SECOND AREA WAS COAL PRODUCTION. BLANCARD NOTED THAT AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN "PROJECT INDEPENDENCE" WAS GREATER UTILIZATION OF COAL. IT WAS MUCH EASIER FOR U.S. TO INCREASE COAL PRODUCTION THAN FOR EUROPE. HOW SUBSTANTIAL AN INCREASE IN COAL PRODUCTION DID THE U.S. ENVISAGE AND HOW MUCH OF THIS INCREASED PRODUCTION WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT? HE SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HIM IN PLANNING FRANCE'S ENERGY PROGRAM TO KNOW THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT COULD COUNT ON U.S. COAL. (FRANCE'S ENERGY PROGRAM SEEKS MAXIMUM DIVERSIFICATION OF HYDRO-CARBON SOURCES BUT FORESEES ONLY MARGINAL POSSIBILITIES FOR PROLONGING LIFE OF DECLINING AND EXPENSIVE DOMESTIC COAL RESERVES.)

5. THE THIRD AREA WAS BREEDER REACTORS. BLANCARD NOTED THAT THE U.S. HAD A SUBSTANTIAL LEAD IN CONVENTIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUCLEAR REACTOR TECHNOLOGY AND THAT FRANCE WAS RELYING HEAVILY ON THIS TECHNOLOGY THROUGH JOINT VENTURES

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BETWEEN FRENCH FIRMS AND GE AND WESTINGHOUSE FOR THE
EXPANSION OF ITS OWN NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM. HOWEVER,
HE CONTINUED, IT WAS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED THAT FRANCE
HAD A LEAD IN FAST BREEDER REACTOR TECHNOLOGY. HE NOTED
THAT IN THE \$10 BILLION ENERGY R&D PROGRAM APPROVED BY
THE U.S. CONGRESS THERE WAS A PROVISION FOR \$2 1/2
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BILLION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BREEDER REACTORS. IT WAS QUITE EVIDENT THAT IF THE U.S. WANTED TO GO ALL OUT, IT COULD EVENTUALLY OVERTAKE THE FRENCH IN THIS FIELD. BUT THIS SEEMED A NEEDLESS EXPENDITURE OF RESOURCES. HE ASKED IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP THE SAME KIND OF COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WITH FRANCE ON THE BASIS OF FRENCH TECHNOLOGY THAT THE FRENCH HAD ADOPTED IN THE CONVENTIONAL NUCLEAR REACTOR FIELD ON THE BASIS OF U.S. TECHNOLOGY.

6. COMMENT: ECON/COM MIN WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT IN A POSITION TO EXPRESS OFFICIAL U.S. VIEWS ON THESE THREE QUESTIONS AND LIMITED HIMSELF TO LISTENING POLITELY AND TAKING NOTE. IT IS OBVIOUS, NONETHELESS, THAT THESE ARE AREAS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM OF INTERNATIONAL ENERGY COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN LATER STAGES WHEN THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED FRENCH PARTICIPATION. CONSEQUENTLY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INITIAL COMMENTS THE DEPARTMENT HAS ON THESE QUESTIONS AND WOULD ALSO LIKE TO BE KEPT INFORMED AS WASHINGTON THINKING IN THESE THREE AREAS EVOLVE.
IRWIN

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